

**CLAIMS**

What is claimed is:

- 5 1. A method for managing devices within a distributed data processing system, the method comprising:
- receiving a request for an action at a target device within the distributed data processing system, wherein the request for an action at the target device uniquely identifies the target device using a system address for the target device, wherein completion of the action depends upon a network address of the target device within the distributed data processing system; and
- 10 in response to a determination that a second device within the distributed data processing system has a network address that duplicates the network address of the target device, reporting the duplicate network address to a user along with other system address information for the target device and the second device.
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- 20 2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
- displaying the duplicate network address and other system address information to the user.
- 25 3. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
- requiring the user to enter a virtual private network identifier (VPN ID) to be associated with the target device.

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4. The method of claim 3 further comprising:  
generating a modified system address for the target device based on the entered VPN ID and other system address information for the target device.

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5. The method of claim 3 further comprising:  
permitting the user to assign the entered VPN ID to a network scope associated with the target device.

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6. The method of claim 3 further comprising:  
assigning the entered VPN ID to a network scope associated with the target device.

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7. The method of claim 3 further comprising:  
generating a modified system address for each device in a same scope as the target device based on the entered VPN ID and other system address information associated with each device in the same scope as the target device..

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8. The method of claim 4 further comprising:  
executing the requested action using the modified system address.

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9. An apparatus for managing devices within a distributed data processing system, the apparatus comprising:

receiving means for receiving a request for an  
5 action at a target device within the distributed data processing system, wherein the request for an action at the target device uniquely identifies the target device using a system address for the target device, wherein completion of the action depends upon a network address  
10 of the target device within the distributed data processing system; and

reporting means for reporting in response to a determination that a second device within the distributed data processing system has a network address that  
15 duplicates the network address of the target device, the duplicate network address to a user along with other system address information for the target device and the second device.

20 10. The apparatus of claim 9 further comprising:

displaying means for displaying the duplicate network address and other system address information to the user.

25 11. The apparatus of claim 9 further comprising:

requiring means for requiring the user to enter a virtual private network identifier (VPN ID) to be associated with the target device.

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12. The apparatus of claim 11 further comprising:

generating means for generating a modified system  
address for the target device based on the entered VPN ID  
and other system address information for the target  
5 device.

13. The apparatus of claim 11 further comprising:

accepting means for accepting user input to assign  
the entered VPN ID to a network scope associated with the  
10 target device.

14. The apparatus of claim 11 further comprising:

assigning means for assigning the entered VPN ID to  
a network scope associated with the target device.  
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15. The apparatus of claim 11 further comprising:

generating means for generating a modified system  
address for each device in a same scope as the target  
device based on the entered VPN ID and other system  
20 address information associated with each device in the  
same scope as the target device..

16. The apparatus of claim 12 further comprising:

executing means for executing the requested action  
25 using the modified system address.

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17. A computer program product in a computer readable medium for use in a data processing system for managing devices within a network, the computer program product comprising:

5 instructions for receiving a request for an action at a target device within the distributed data processing system, wherein the request for an action at the target device uniquely identifies the target device using a system address for the target device, wherein completion  
10 of the action depends upon a network address of the target device within the distributed data processing system; and

instructions for presenting, in response to a determination that a second device within the distributed  
15 data processing system has a network address that duplicates the network address of the target device, the duplicate network address to a user along with other system address information for the target device and the second device.

20 18. The computer program product of claim 17 further comprising:

instructions for displaying the duplicate network address and other system address information to the user.

25 19. The computer program product of claim 17 further comprising:

instructions for requiring the user to enter a virtual private network identifier (VPN ID) to be  
30 associated with the target device.

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20. The computer program product of claim 19 further comprising:

instructions for generating a modified system address for the target device based on the entered VPN ID and other system address information for the target device.

21. The computer program product of claim 19 further comprising:

instructions for accepting user input to assign the entered VPN ID to a network scope associated with the target device.

22. The computer program product of claim 19 further comprising:

instructions for assigning the entered VPN ID to a network scope associated with the target device.

23. The computer program product of claim 19 further comprising:

instructions for generating a modified system address for each device in a same scope as the target device based on the entered VPN ID and other system address information associated with each device in the same scope as the target device.

24. The computer program product of claim 20 further comprising:

instructions for executing the requested action using the modified system address.